



Housing Assistance & Models Meeting Notes

TO:

Sally Harrison, MSHDA

FROM:

Paul Elam, PPA
Scott Southard, PPA
(Nicholas Armit, PPA)

SUBJECT:

Housing Assistance & Models Meeting
Notes, October 15, 2008

DATE:

November 4, 2008

Items Relevant to Other Workgroups

- The training team might be needed to help in educating the public on what Housing First does and what it could do for their region.
- The training team may be needed to prepare property managers as Housing First moves forward.

Public Policy Research,

Development,

and Evaluation

Attendees

- *Sally Harrison, Chair*
- *Michele Wildman, Co-Chair*
- *Michael Appel*
- *Pat Caruso*
- *Shanna Cherubini*
- *Jillian Fitzsimmons*
- *Patti Geisert*
- *Janet Irrer*
- *Pat Kremenski*
- *Sharon Ott*
- *John Peterson*
- *Holly Pomranka*
- *Stacey Vandenberg*
- *Jim Yarbough*
- *Paul Elam, PPA*
- *Scott Southard, PPA*

Jeffrey D. Padden

President

Discussion Items

Co-Chair for Housing Assistance and Models

- Sally Harrison discussed the role of the co-chair.
- Michele Wildman agreed to act as the co-chair for the workgroup.

Reviewing Minutes from Previous Meeting

- SH introduced the group to the minutes created by PPA of the previous meeting.
- The majority of the previous meeting was related to reviewing the charter.
- The good news for the team is that they are not starting from scratch; a lot of the work listed has been done or started.
- The Charter and Action Plan that was reviewed in the previous meeting is a base to start with. It can help the team find priority areas.

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- Most of the future meetings will be over the phone, and will last about an hour.
 - SH hopes to have another in-person meeting sometime in the spring.

Reviewing Charter

- SH gave the group a few minutes to read the current draft of the Charter.
- Membership in the group was discussed. How many should be included?
 - We are only missing region 2.
 - Maximum of 25?
 - SH brought up the notion of inviting people with strong capacity in particular areas; for example, property management companies, for-profits, etc.
- SH drew the group's attention to the six strategic issues listed on the first page.

Six Strategic Areas for the Housing Assistance and Models Workgroup

Strategy 1: *Promote transition to "Housing First" orientation by community-based agencies and homeless service providers.*

Strategy 2: *Increase access to existing affordable housing opportunities, in both urban and rural areas, for homeless populations through state-local partnerships, planning, and prioritization.*

Strategy 3: *Expand housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk populations through creation of working partnerships with property owners, landlords, and developers – linked to local plans for implementation*

Strategy 4: *Promote collaboration among Supportive Housing partners, including service agencies, developers and property management companies.*

Strategy 5: *Develop a common definition of supportive housing that meets the needs of a broad constituency.*

Strategy 6: *MSHDA and the Michigan Affordable Housing Community should be responsive to local communities and provide a wide of array of supportive housing options that support personal choice.*

- There is some concern with how people view "Housing First." This aspect needs to be explained clearly.
- SH also discussed the notes around the scope of the work. The group will not be implementing it ourselves. The goal of the team is to come up with ideas, lay them out on paper and then share them with others that can make those changes. The charge of the Workgroup is to develop and submit recommendations related to HA&M
- Membership for the group is only for a minimum of one year, but the group is hoping to stay active for two. The hope is to avoid too much change in the group's enrollment.
- Future meetings were also scheduled: Second Monday of each month, 1 PM. Each meeting will be one hour in length.
 - Materials for meeting will be given to the workgroup one week before the scheduled meeting.
- SH took this opportunity to note to the team that she wants everyone to feel that they can share and contribute to the team. Members are all equal, with equal voices. She wants the group to represent different perspectives, moving towards one consensus.
- The group agreed to the Charter.

Develop Action Plan

- Paul Elam from PPA introduced the Action Plan to the team as well as the SMART Outcomes document.
- SH noted that we might have to refer some action to other teams. We need that dialogue in not only this group, but as well across groups.

Strategy 1: Develop data systems infrastructure that documents need and promotes systems change for ending homelessness.

- There are some concern around the current level.
- JY began the discussion by bringing to the attention of the group some of the obstacles with Housing First and the lack of support for it in some areas.
 - MA brought up substance abuse as an example. Deal with addiction first and then give them housing? Should they hit bottom first or can we help them to a roof over their head before dealing with their addiction? This is a debate in the field.
 - ◆ “Wet” housing and “Use” housing discussed by team.
 - ◆ In a setting like this, do they almost need to be next door to their support services?
 - Is everyone appropriate for Housing First? Should someone with murder on their record have access to help?
 - Some emergency shelters have voiced concern that they will be “shut down” if Housing First is in the area.
 - DHS has a gradual plan to move towards Housing First. The money needs to stay there for the staff.
 - The pilot program in Kent County was discussed. They are no longer going to fund motel nights. This is part of their ten-year plan.
 - JP also discussed the opinion some have of the people involved: People in need as vulnerable, and people giving them the housing as predators.
 - How would this relate to safe houses for domestic violence?
 - ◆ There is a safety factor that has to be taken into consideration for those seeking housing.
 - The key note for the team from this discussion is the different subpopulations that are in plan and how each of their concerns will need to be addressed in this strategy.
 - ◆ Will there be different types of units and models for the different subpopulations.
- Options are limited for this (financial and otherwise), based on communities.
- Property managers have concerns related to fair housing laws and how this approach impacts practice.
- It was noted that Housing First needs a triage model.
 - What are the risks and barriers?
 - What are the different things we need to screen around?
 - We need solid visibility.
 - ◆ SH noted that MSHDA needs to look internally at what things are being funded. What options are available across the state? This could tie into training for preparing property managers.
 - ◆ How does this relate to rural vs. urban? Are there different versions in different areas? And how does this relate to the different cities’ ten-year plans.
- Overall, does this need to go to “Training” group for finding education options for the public and Housing First’s image.

- One concern SH has is that a lot of this conversation could be philosophy and things could be very different once things start moving forward.
 - Current housing system does not provide opportunities to support a “Housing First philosophy.”
- The fear though is not to do anything. These issues can not be resolved on their own.
 - When will the regions be ready to make this change? Why are they not ready to start?

New Action Plan for Housing First

1. Develop and Implement models that will meet the needs of a clients. (for specific subpopulations)
 2. Develop a triage approach through individualized housing action plans for clients.
 3. Make housing options available throughout the state.
 4. Train providers throughout the state on how to implement the models:
 - a. Urban
 - b. Rural
-

- The group agreed to the new action plan. It was noted that it was not the person that isn't ready, it's the system.
 - That should be incorporated into a statement.
 - The opportunities are not available yet.
 - Need a system that gives more options.
- Those Action Plan items in Strategy #1 that were *deleted* were:
 - 2a. Expand the use of specifically targeted transitional rent subsidies for homeless populations (including HUD/SHP Leasing Assistance and HOME/TBRA).
 - 2b. Increase use of long-term/permanent housing subsidies, both at state and local level, targeted to homeless populations (using HUD Supportive Housing & Leasing Assistance, Shelter + Care, and Housing Choice Vouchers).
 - 3a. Fund shelter-based and/or community-based “housing resource specialists” to support rapid exit from shelters and successful re-housing.
 - 3b. Develop and implement a statewide web-based Housing Locator technology to increase effectiveness in more rapid re-housing of homeless populations.
 - 3c. Work through Continua of Care and Community Collaboratives to assure delivery of supportive services necessary for success in housing stabilization.
 - 3d. Provide training and technical assistance to assist community-based programs and communities in implementing “housing first” strategies.
 - 3e. Focus data gathering/performance outcomes measures (via HMIS) on assessment of results pertinent to “housing first” success (e.g., length of shelter stay, time to access supportive services).

Strategy 2: Increase access to existing affordable housing opportunities, in both urban and rural areas, for homeless populations through state-local partnership, planning, and prioritization.

- SH began by discussing the opportunities in this economy. There are opportunities there to fund better options.
- JY discussed progress regarding his work on a board relating to criminal background and timeframe for needs.
 - Some criteria limit housing opportunities (DUIs, for example).
- Development of tenant-based rental assistance opportunities should be promoted at the local level (OPHA's, OPJ's).
- MSHDA housing and their issues with landlords discussed by team. The safety and quality of life is key.
 - MPRI noticed huge increases when criminals get to pick their own homes.
- MW noted that we need to grasp all of the possibilities of what can be done.
 - For example, environmental studies, etc. More can be done than just local review.
- Kalamazoo as a unique location discussed.
 - As an example of challenges of having balance- funds for what needs to be done.
- MA noted that there are different needs for different locations. Different models? Different advantages? Different lengths of time needed? Different markets?
- Recommendation 2 discussed.
 - JY's experience in this area was introduced by SH.
 - This task needs to be a tool or strategy.
 - Need an action to develop and distribute a toolkit
 - ◆ SV: "Teach everything, we create."
 - This was assigned to existing MSHDA committee (JY).
- SH sees action 3a different from 2b
- Modify 3a: DHS should standardize process across counties in policy implementation of housing supports that include assistance with:
 - Security deposits
 - First month's rent
 - Housing inspections
- PC discussed DHS and their perspective on action 3a. Policies do exist.
 - JP noted that they relate to prevention of eviction. How is it interpreted? How is it applied?
 - MW asked about review of locations.
 - ◆ DHS does not review places.
 - ◆ What will be DHS role in this in the future?
- It was decided that action 3b (work through community collaboratives to develop systematic cross-systems training to promote increased use of existing housing options) will be taken out for now.

Strategy 3: Expand housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk populations through creation of working partnerships with property owners, landlords, and developers -- linked to local plans for implementation.

- SH noted that a big part of this relates to relationships. It is kind of like co-signing on a lease.
- Landlords in different communities discussed. We need to work to develop these relationships.
 - SH noted that this will not be difficult.
 - PC shared her experienced with DHS and her work in this.
 - SV discussed her experiences. Newsletters to them, appreciation luncheons, etc.
 - ◆ SV noted as well that this can sometimes lead to employment options for residents (repair work, etc.).
 - ◆ SV already has training for landlords.
- Action 1e already being done; 1d is already being done (SH).
- Meeting concluded at this point, the rest of Strategy 3 will be discussed in the next meeting.

Tasks Completed

- Adopted Charter
- Appointed Co-Chair Michele Wildman
- Reviewed two of the six strategies
 - New action plan for Housing First agreed to by the team.
- Scheduled future meetings
 - Second Monday of each month, 1 PM.

Tasks Assigned

- See “New Action Plan for Housing First” table, above.
- Strategy 2, Recommendation 2, assigned to JY (existing MSHDA committee).
 - Need an action to develop and distribute a toolkit.

Next Meeting

- November 10, 1 PM.
 - This will be a conference call, number to be made available later.